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APPLICATION NUMBER: 60/537,243

FILING DATE: *January 14, 2004*

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011404

14230 U.S. PTO

PROVISIONAL APPLICATION COVER SHEET

This is a request for filing a PROVISIONAL APPLICATION under 37 CFR
1.53(b)(2).

Docket Number: TIMK 8546P2 US
Express Mail No.: EV 383195075 US

22264 U.S. PTO
60/537243

011404

INVENTOR(s)/APPLICANT(s)

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE INITIAL	RESIDENCE (CITY AND EITHER STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY
Ai	Xiaolan		Massillon, Ohio

TITLE OF THE INVENTION (280 characters max)

AN ELECTRO-MECHANICAL GEAR SELECTOR

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

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ENCLOSED APPLICATION PARTS (check all that apply)

- | | | |
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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specification | Number of pages [6] | <input type="checkbox"/> Claiming Small Entity Status |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawings | Number of sheets [13] | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) |
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Respectfully submitted,



Edward A. Boeschstein, Reg. No. 22,986

Date: 1-14-04

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EXPRESS MAIL FILING CERTIFICATE

RE: U.S. Provisional Patent Application
TITLE: AN ELECTRO-MECHANICAL GEAR SELECTOR
INVENTOR: Xiaolan Ai

I hereby certify that this U.S. Provisional Patent Application is being deposited with the United States Postal Service utilizing the "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service addressed to Mailstop Provisional Patent Application, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-3615 on January 14, 2004.


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AN ELECTRO-MECHANICAL GEAR SELECTOR

Xiaolan Ai

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Synchro-mesh devices are commonly used in vehicle gear boxes to simplify the operation of gear change so that this can be done by unskilled drivers without the occurrence of clashes and consequent damage. These devices usually incorporate a positive engagement clutch such as a dog clutch and a friction clutch such as a cone clutch. These clutches were designed primarily for toque-interrupt shifting where the power was momentarily cut off during gear change. The gear and shaft were first brought to the same speed by the friction clutch and then a positive engagement was made through actuating the positive engagement clutch. The synchro-mesh devices can be applied to sliding-mesh gear boxes but almost always used with constant-mesh boxes. In spite their popularity, the synchro-mesh are devices are not always trouble free. There are times when the jaws or teeth of one member of the positive engagement clutch are not aligned up well with the groove on the mating member and the clutch will not engage. In addition, synchro-mesh devices are prone to wear and are not suitable for power-shifting.

With the introduction of automated manual transmissions (AMT), the desire for trouble free engagement and power-shifting becomes increasingly strong. It almost becomes a necessity rather than a luxury. The present invention provides a compact gear selector, capable of providing positive and trouble free engagement and power-shifting operation.

The present invention relates to a positive engagement clutch in general and to an electromagnetic actuated gear selector for automated manual transmissions in particular.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Refer now to Figures 1 and 2, a preferred embodiment comprising a gear-clutch assembly 1 and an electromagnetic actuator assembly 2. The gear-clutch assembly 1 further comprises a gear 10, a needle bearing 11, a hub 12, a hub cover 13, a spring 14, an internally splined ramp ring 15, an externally splined ramp ring 16, a set of keys 17 and a set of coil spring 18. The electromagnetic actuator assembly 2 comprises a base 20 ring, an electric coil 21, a case 22, a plunge ring 23, a sleeve 24, a case holder 25, a bearing holder 26 and a ball bearing 27.

The gear 10 is has two inner cylindrical surfaces 10a and 10b (Figure 3). A plurality of axial grooves 10c was cut out on cylindrical surface 10a. The gear 10 supported through the needle bearing 11 on hub 12.

Hub 12 (see Figure 4) has outer cylindrical surfaces 12c, 12d and 12e and inner cylindrical surfaces 12a 12b and 12g. A plurality of one-side-open grooves 12k was cut out of external surfaces 12d and 12e. A plurality of spline grooves 12h was cut out of inner surface 12b. The spline grooves 12h extend roughly half width of the surface 12b. Gear 10 is riding on surface 12c of the hub via needle bearing 11. The inner surface 12a of hub 12 rides on a mating surface of a supporting shaft 30 (not shown).

Hub cover 13 (see Figure 5) has a cover plate 13a and a spindle 13b. The plate 13a is mounted to the end face 12j of the hub 12. Hub cover 13 also has an inner cylindrical surface 13c that rides on the supporting shaft 30 (no shown).

Key 17 (Figure 6) is made to have two top surfaces 17a and 17b and a ramp surface 17c connecting the two top surfaces. Two recesses 17d and 17e are cut out from the bottom surface 17f. The key is assembled in one of the open-end grooves 12k of the hub 12. The key 16 is fully confined both in circumferential and axial directions by groove 12k and by the hub plate 13a of hub cover 13. There is a key for each open-end groove 12k. A coil spring 18 is hosted in each recess of the key 16. They are two coil springs 18 for each key 17 that urge the key to move outward away from its retracted position at the bottom of the grooves 12k (see Figures 7 and 8).

The internally splined ramp ring 15, externally splined ramp ring 16 and the spring 14 are assembled axially inside of hub 12 and surrounded by the inner cylindrical surface 12b (see Figure 8). The internally splined ramp 15 has a flat end face 15a and curved end faces 15b where three sets of bi-directional helical ramping surfaces are formed (Figures 9(a) and 9(b)). The flat end face 15a is placed against the annular surface 12i of hub 12. The internal spline 15c is fitted over a mating external spine on the supporting shaft 30 to rotationally fix the internally splined ramp ring 15 with the supporting shaft 30. The externally splined ramp ring 16 also has a flat end face 16a and curved end faces 16b similar to that of ramp ring 15. The curved end faces 16b of the externally splined ramp ring 16 is placed against the curved end faces 15b of the internally splined

ramp ring 15. Spring 14 is placed between the cover plate 13a of hub cover 13 and externally splined ramp ring 16. Spring 14 urges the externally splined ramp ring 16 axially firmly pressing it against the internally splined ramp ring 15. The external spline 16c of the externally splined ramp ring 16 is fitted into the internal spline 12h of hub 12 to rotationally fix the externally splined ramp ring 16 with the hub 12. The externally splined ramp ring 16 can move axially inside of hub 12.

As can be appreciated, the spring 14 and ramp rings 15 and 16 inside hub 12 serve as a shock load damping device. When an impact load is transmitted through hub 12 to supporting shaft 30 or vice versa, it causes the two ramp rings 15 and 16 to rotate relative to each other until spring 14 is fully compressed. The rotation stiffness is relatively low before the spring is bottomed out. This gives a good damping effect against shock loads.

The number of grooves 10c on the inner surface 10a of the gear 10 is chosen to be different from the number of keys 17 in the grooves 12k of the hub 12. The number of keys 17 is evenly divisible by the difference between the number of keys 17 and the number of grooves 10c on the inner surface 10a of the gear 10. The width of grooves 10c is wider than the width of key 17 such that at any angular alignment between the gear and hub there will always be at least one key that will align and be received by at least one groove 10c on the inner surface of the gear 10.

In the embodiment shown in Figure 1, the number of keys 17 in hub is 15 and the number of grooves on the inner surface of the gear is 12. Thus, for any given angular alignment between hub and gear there will always be $(15-12=) 3$

keys 17 aligning respectively with three grooves 10c and receivable by these grooves.

The engagement between hub 12 and gear 10 is controlled and actuated the electromagnetic actuator assembly 2 (Figure 10). The actuator assembly is axially fixed to and supported by the spindle 13b of the hub cover 13 through the ball bearing 27. The plunge ring 23 can move freely along the axial direction relative to the hub 12. The plunge ring 23 may rotationally be fixed to the hub 12.

The plunge ring 23 has two axial positions. When the electric coil 21 is energized, the plunge ring 23 moves toward the electric coil 21 closing the air gap between the base ring 20 and plunge ring 23. As the plunge ring 21 is moving ward the electric coil 21, it pushes the keys 17 along their ramp surfaces 17c and forces cams the keys 17 into the grooves 12k in the hub 12. The clutch is disengaged (see Figure 11).

When electric coil 21 is de-energized, the plunge ring 23 retracts back and moves away from the electric coil 21 by at least one key that is urged outward from it retracted position. In the current embodiment, when de-energized, there will always be at least three keys 17 that are urged outwardly from their retracted positions and pushed the plunge ring 23 axially away from the electric coil 21. The clutch is engaged (see Figure 12).

During engagement, if the speeds of the hub 12 and gear 10 are not synchronized, there will be an impact load exerts on shaft 30. As mentioned, the impact load is substantially reduced by spring 14 and ramp rings 15 and 16.

The embodiment shown here is to disclose the invention. It by no means restricts the scope of the invention.

CLAIMS:

1. A gear-clutch assembly organized about an axis and comprising:

A gear having grooves that open inwardly toward the axis and extend axially;

A hub located within the gear where it is capable of rotating within the gear, the hub having grooves that open outwardly away from the axis and extend axially;

keys located within the grooves of the hub and being capable of moving radially toward and away from the axis, the arrangement being such that when the keys are permitted to move away from the axis, at least one will enter one of the grooves in the gear to couple the gear and hub so that they will rotate in unison, and

an actuator for effecting radial displacement of the keys.

2. An assembly according to claim 1 and further comprising springs for urging the keys outwardly away from the axis; and wherein the actuator when energized moves the keys inwardly toward the axis.

3. An assembly according to claim 2 and further comprising means for absorbing torsional shocks.

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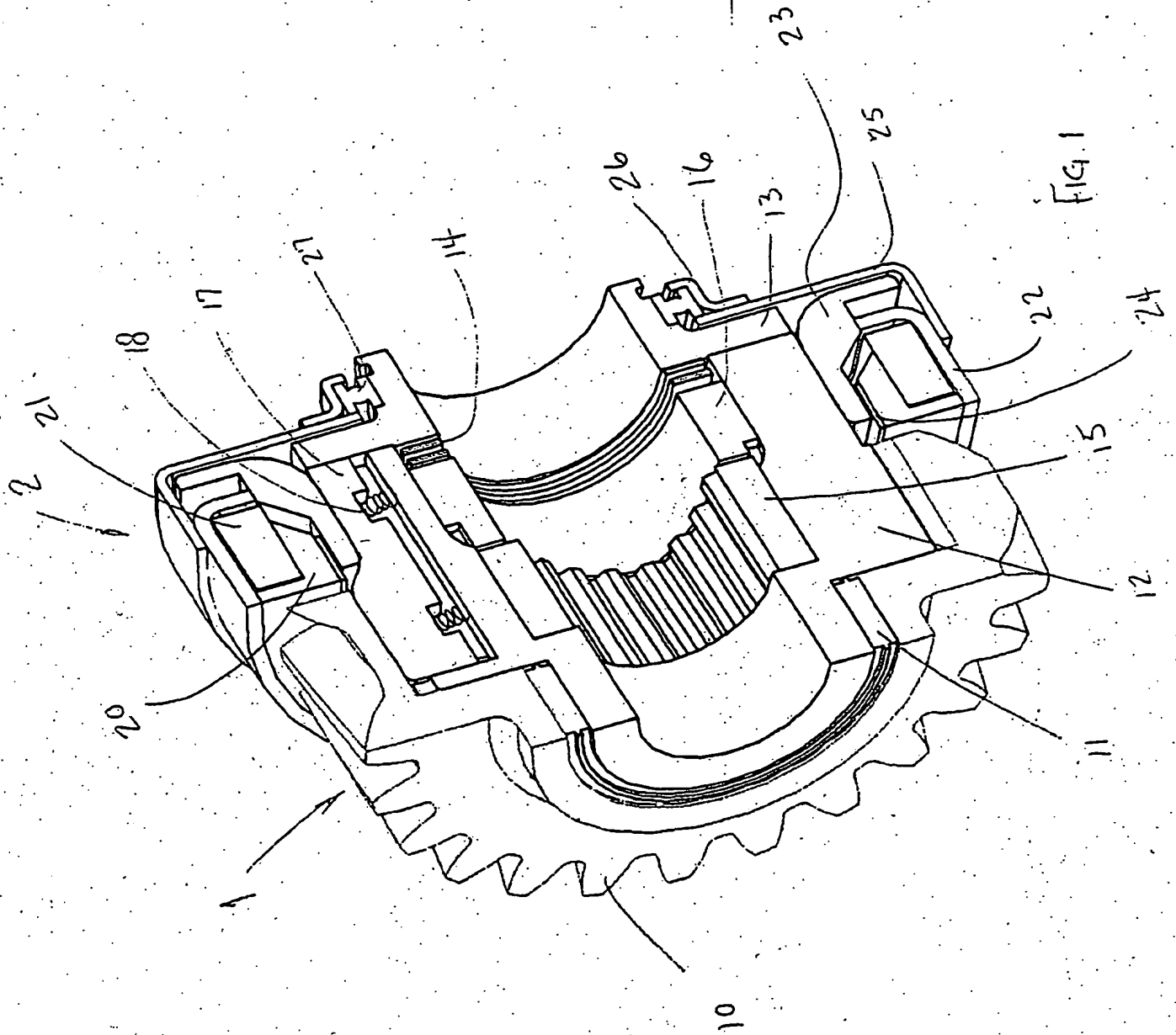




FIG. 2

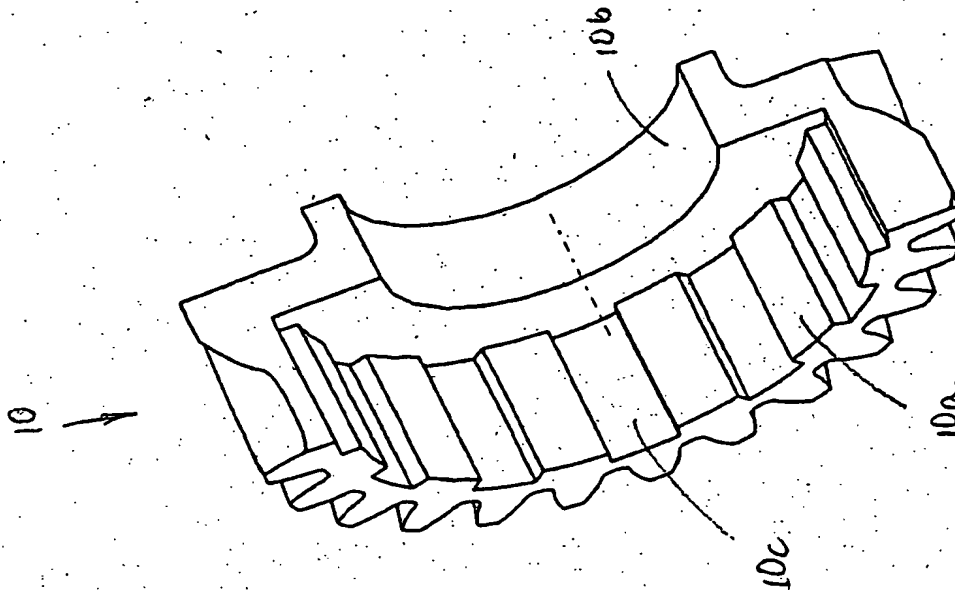


FIG. 3

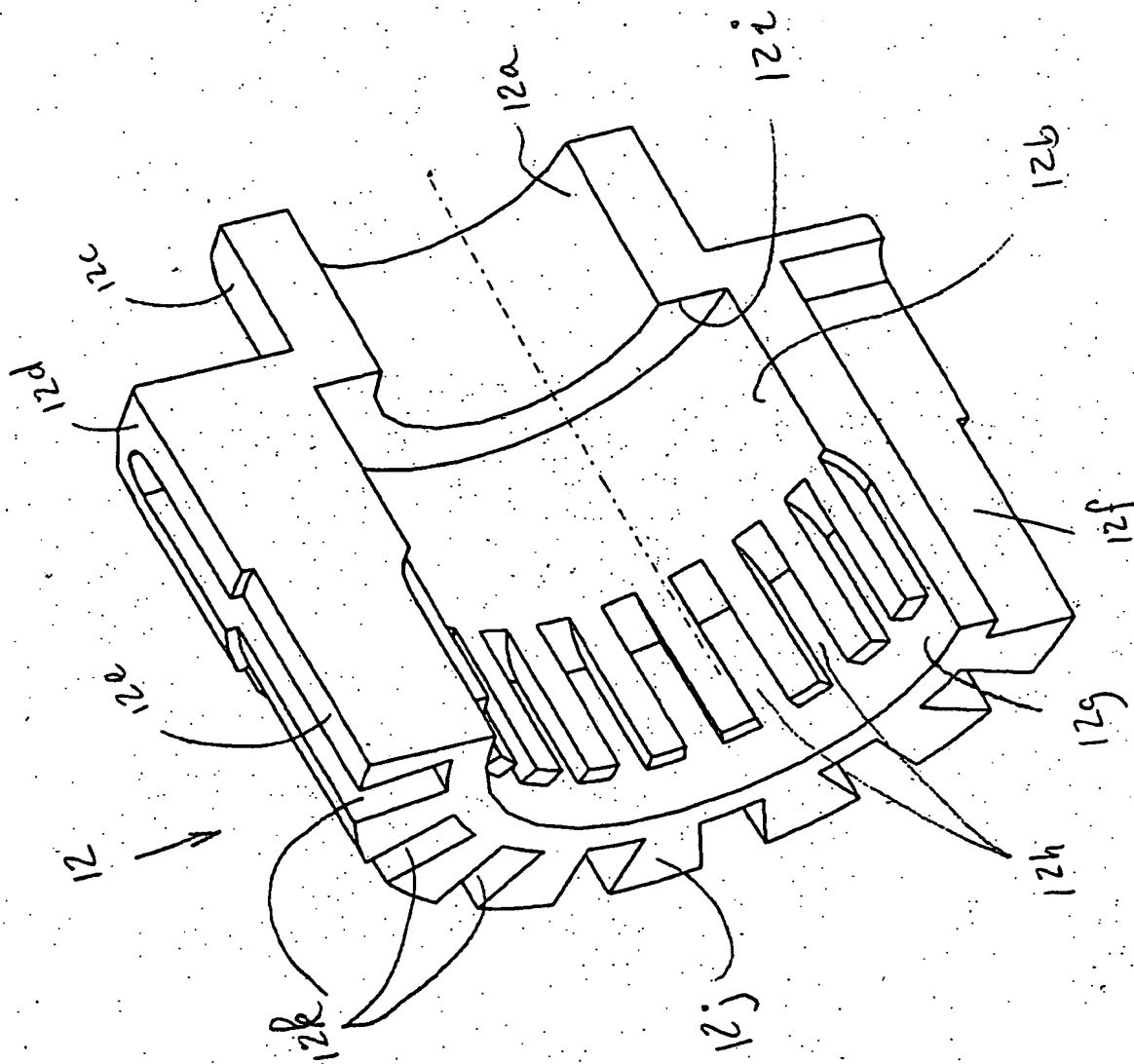


FIG. 4

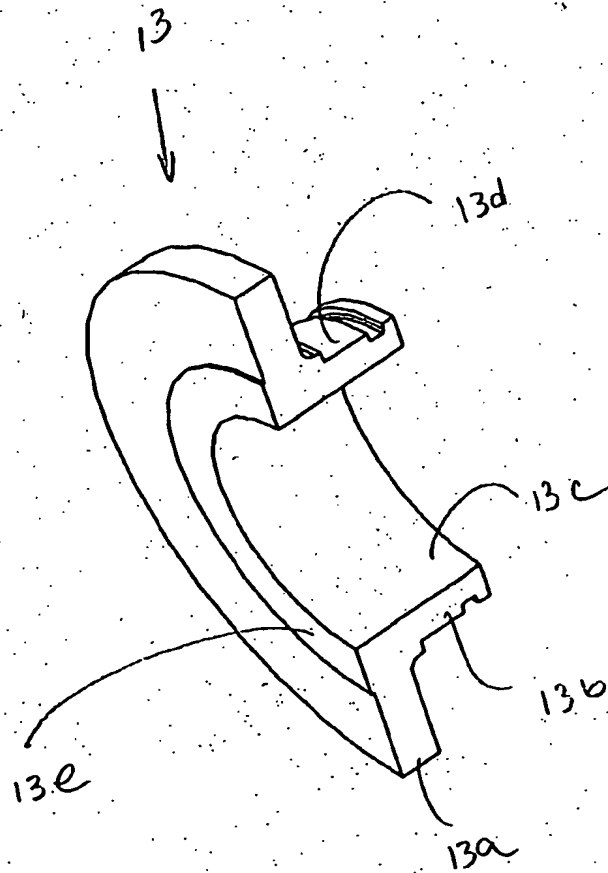
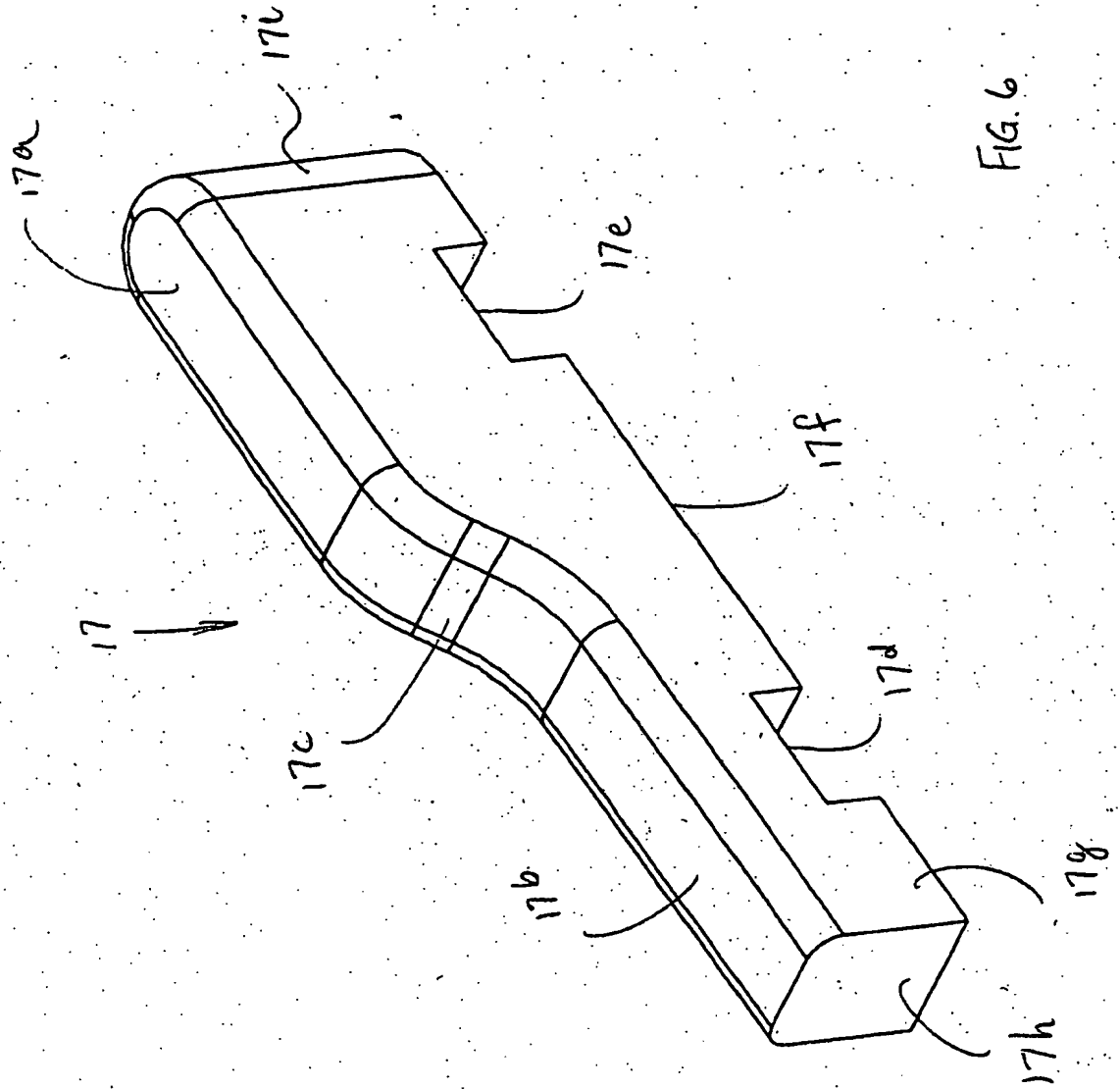


FIG. 5



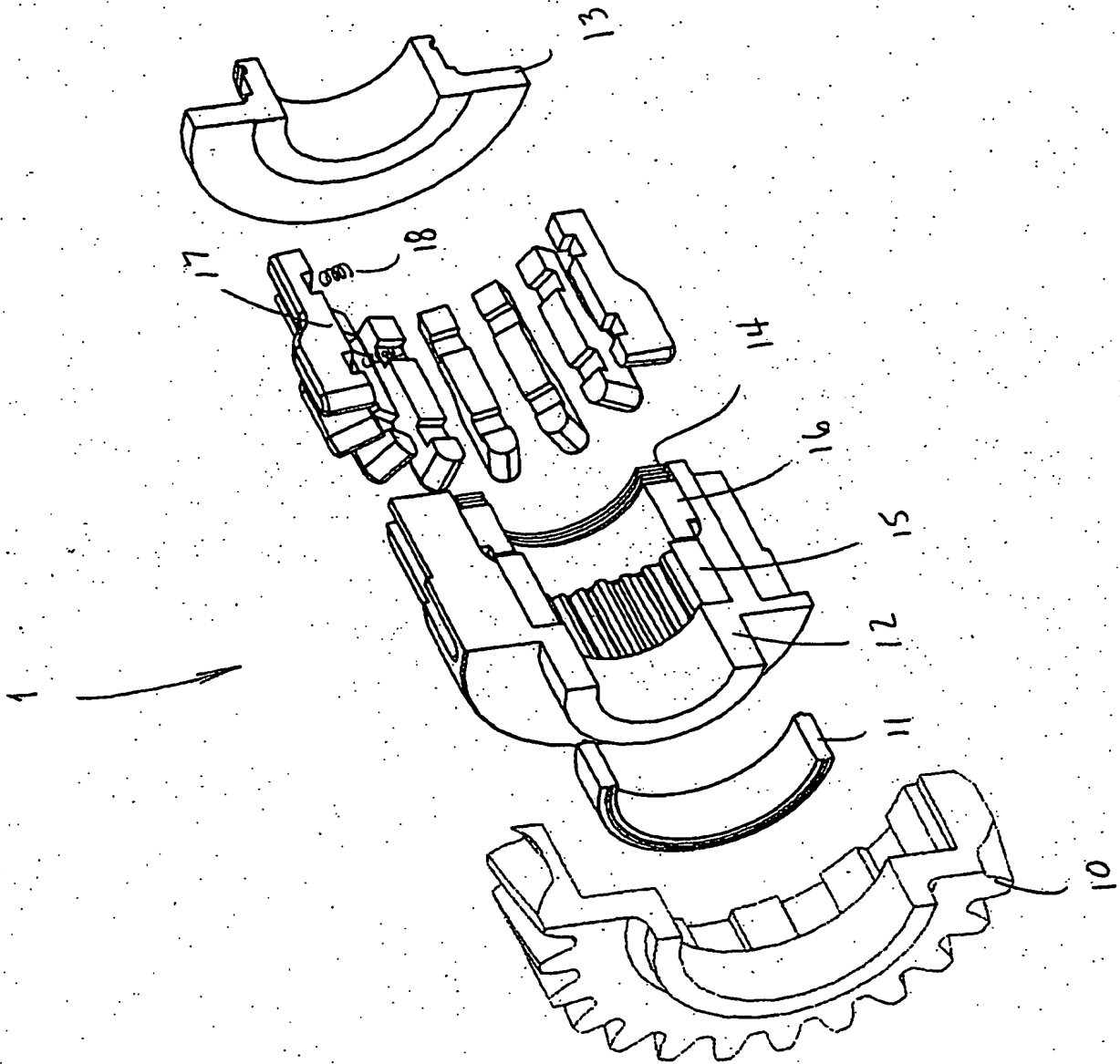
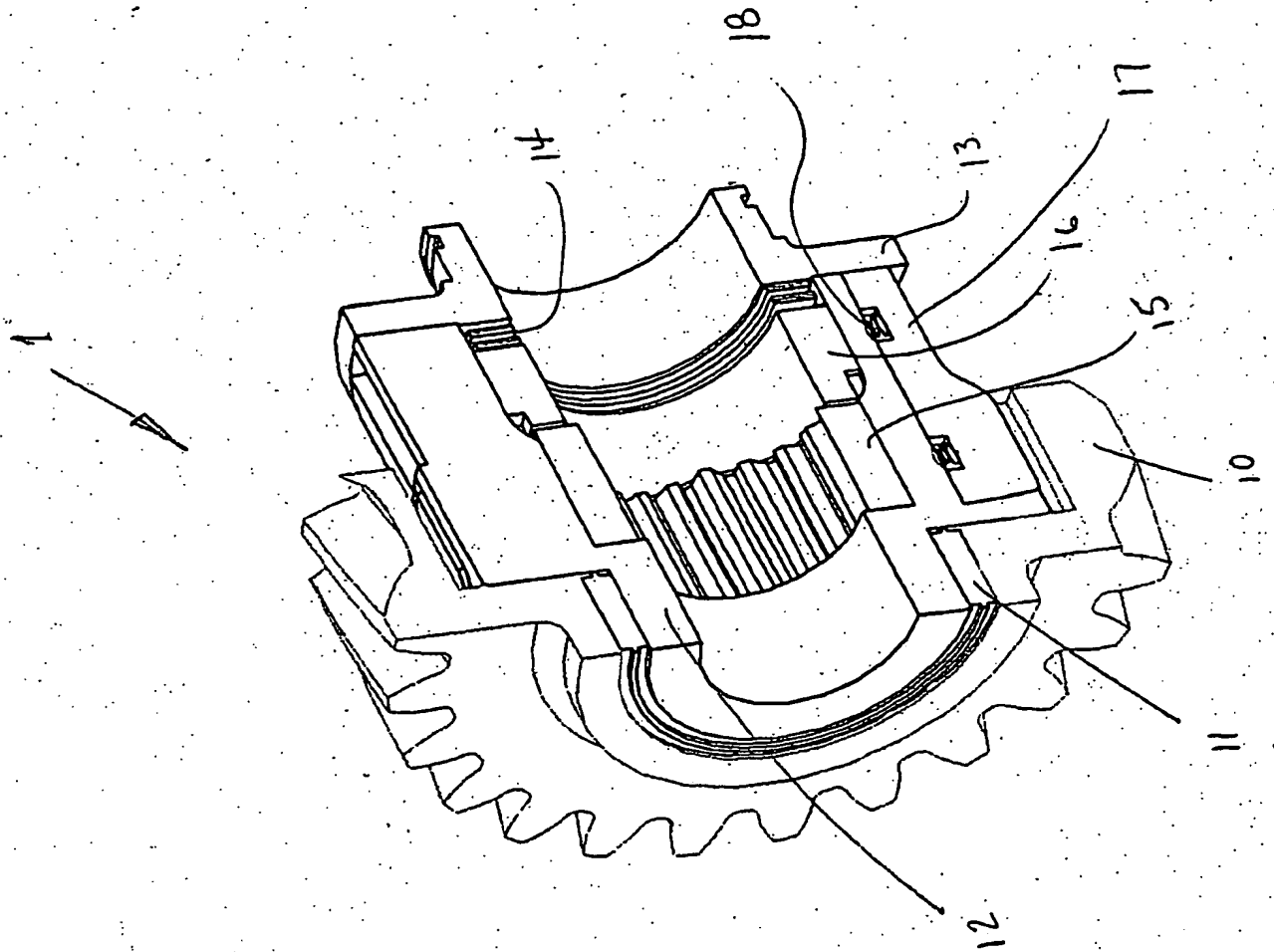


FIG. 7

Fig. 8



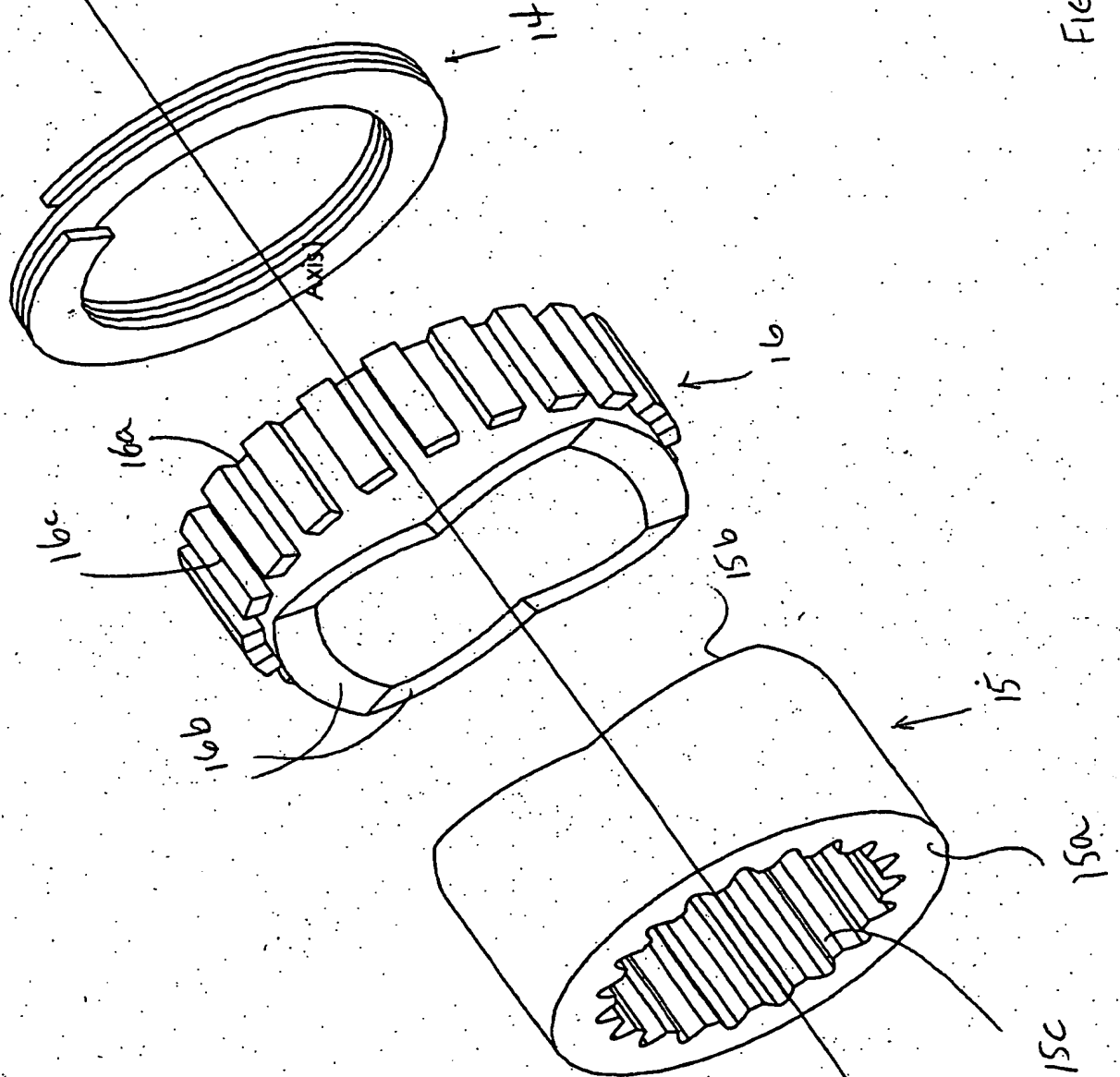
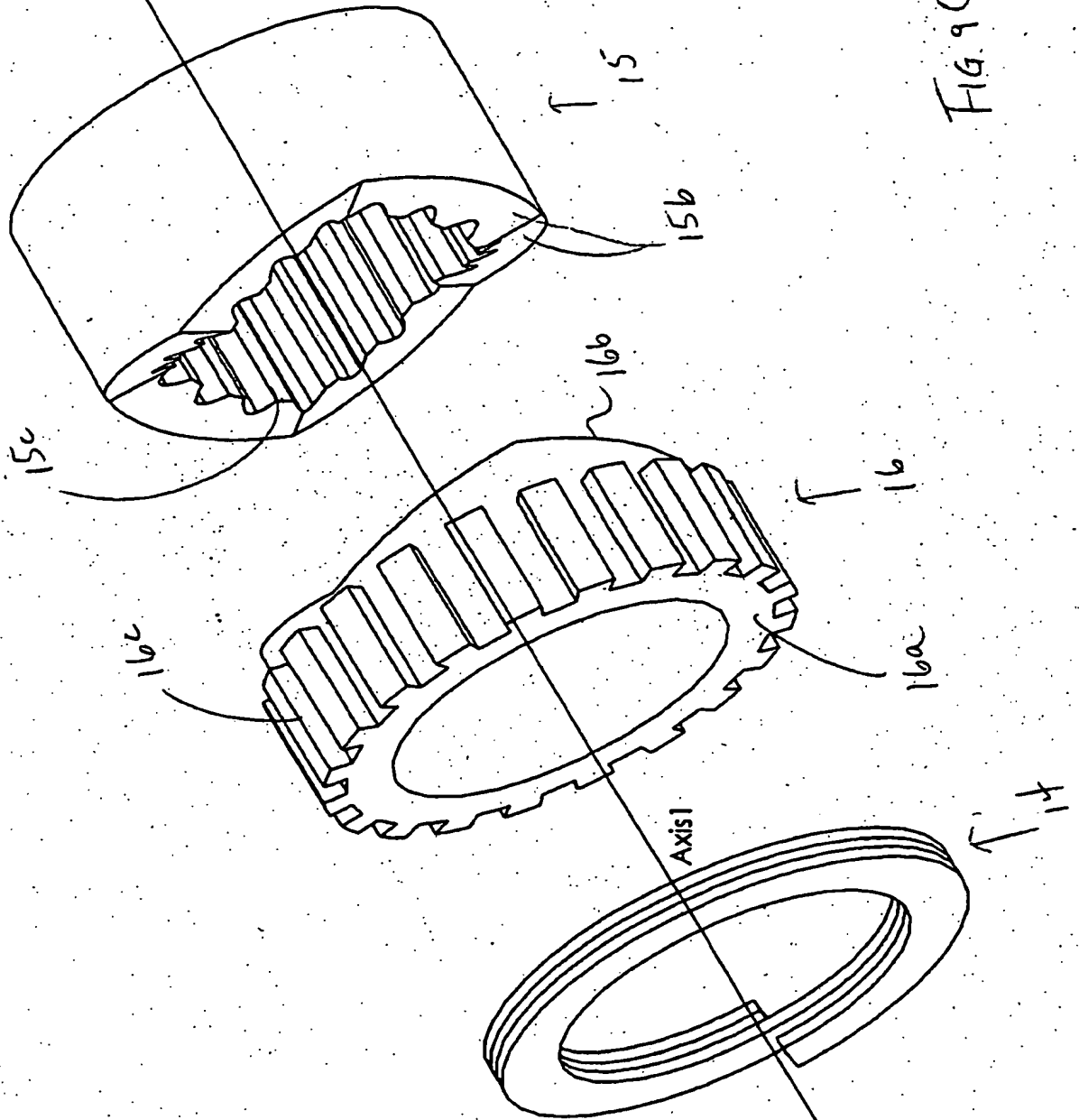
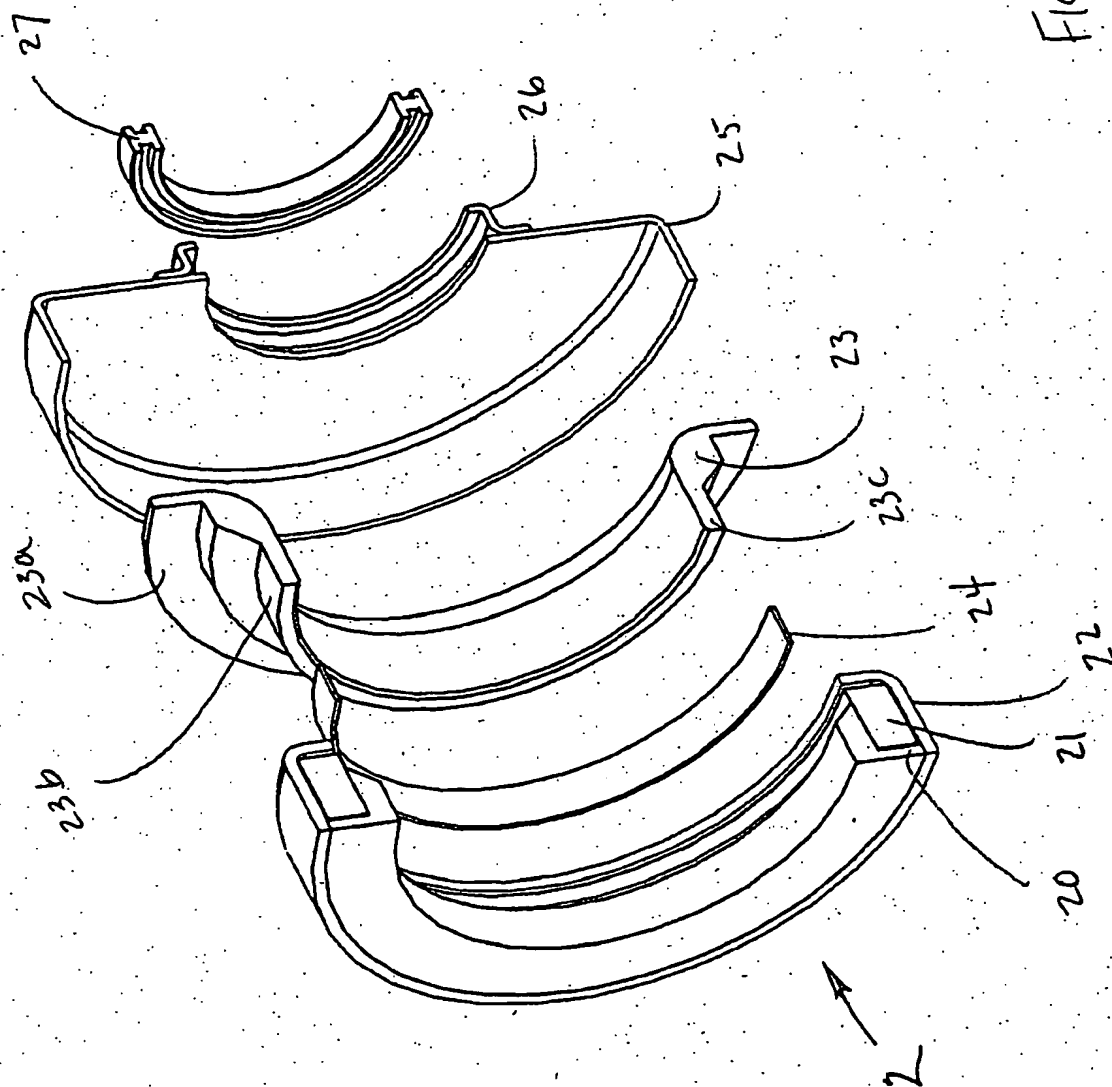
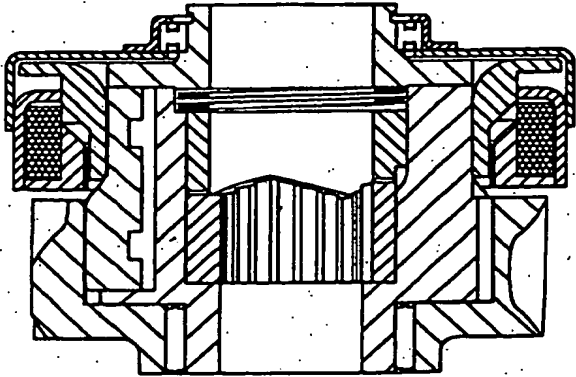


Fig. 9(a)





DN TIMK 8546P2 US Sheet 12 of 13
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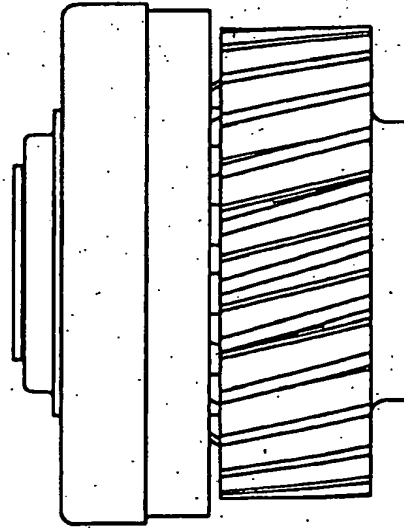
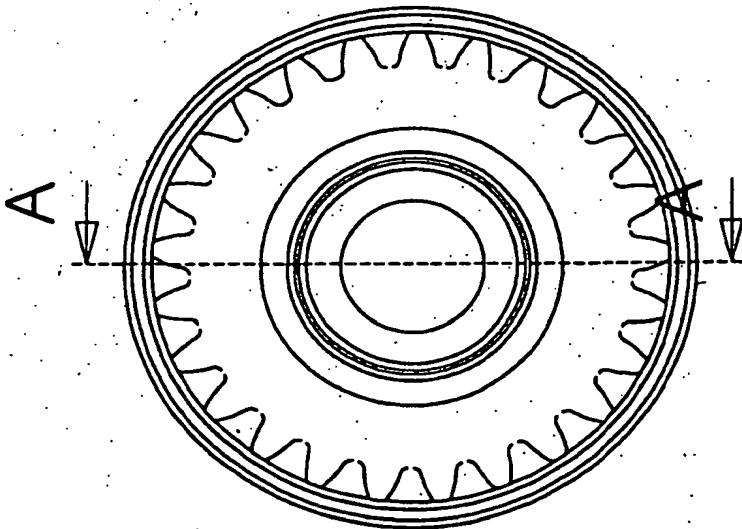


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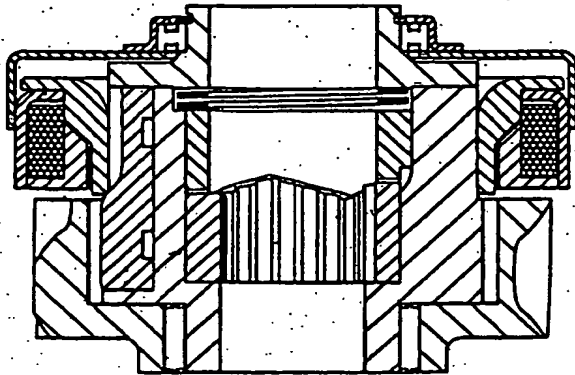
Fig. 12

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 Title: AN ELECTRO-MECHANICAL
 GEAR SELECTOR
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A-A

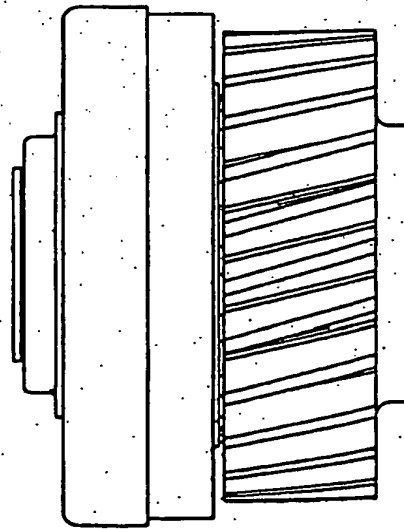
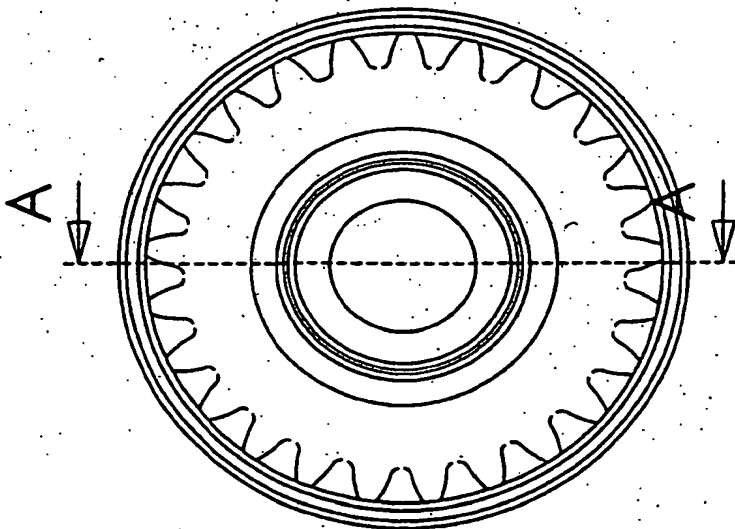


FIG. 11

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Date of mailing (day/month/year) 07 March 2005 (07.03.2005)	
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International publication date (day/month/year)	Priority date (day/month/year) 14 January 2004 (14.01.2004)
Applicant THE TIMKEN COMPANY et al	

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<u>Priority date</u>	<u>Priority application No.</u>	<u>Country or regional Office or PCT receiving Office</u>	<u>Date of receipt of priority document</u>
14 January 2004 (14.01.2004)	60/537,243	US	18 February 2005 (18.02.2005)

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